

Multiple Locations

The following section contains a description of all the functions that can be used to transfer data between different locations using this software.

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Multiple Locations

Current users of MacCheckout have been using the application at multiple locations, e.g. three (3) Media Centers in three (3) different buildings, with each Media Center using one copy. A similar situation can involve multiple departments within the same building. Each location uses one (1) copy of the application.

The need arose to be able to transfer data between the locations since MacCheckout cannot currently be networked. The areas targeted were: Fines, People and Equipment. Each area and the functions supplied will be describe in this chapter.

Fines

Fine Transfer

The most important area is Fines. You cannot have a person getting a fine at one location and then being able to go to another location and reserving or checking out equipment there. So there had to be a way of transferring the Fine data from one location to another.

Each location MUST have its own main two letter code. This makes sense since you would not want all locations to be the same, the people returning equipment would not know what location to return the items to.

Make sure the 'Disable Fine Transfer' under 'Operating Flags' in the 'System Setup' menu is not turned on. In the event that it is, you must turn it off.

The system is now ready to work with Fine Data.

Each time the system is 'ShutDown' it creates a special 'Fine' file containing data that is relevant to that system. This file will be called 'MacCheckout.Fines' but will have the two letter location code as part of the name, e.g. 'PH' will result in 'PH MacCheckout.Fines'. This file can be copied at anytime during the day, before the next 'ShutDown', to every system that requires the information. The file should be placed in the 'MacCheckout' folder that each system is run from. (It can also be placed in the top level of the hard disk.) This is repeated for every system that needs the data, e.g. three (3) systems, AA, BB, CC.

'AA' will get 'BB MacCheckout.Fines' and 'CC MacCheckout.Fines'

'BB' will get 'AA MacCheckout.Fines' and 'CC MacCheckout.Fines'

'CC' will get 'AA MacCheckout.Fines' and 'BB MacCheckout.Fines'

During the next 'ShutDown' each system scans for these files. It only uses the files it finds that DO NOT match the current main location. It then integrates all the data from that file into the current system.

For Example:

If the current system is 'AA' and it uses the file 'BB MacCheckout.Fines', then all the fines in the file from 'BB' that are not currently part of 'AA' will be added to the database. It also looks at ALL fines that 'AA' has on file from 'BB'. If any of those fines are no longer in the file from 'BB', then they are deleted.

All fine additions and deletions are reported as part of the 'System Report'.

With multiple locations active, peoples ID cards are then kept up to date with fines they acquire at different locations. How up to date the data is, will depend on how often the Fine files are transferred between systems.

(*Note:* Transfer can happen either by 'sneaker' net or by copying them over a network. The system never accesses these files until 'ShutDown', so they can be copied at anytime. You do not need to worry about file conflicts, or the possibility that the file may be open.)

You may get the scenario of a person who comes to location 'AA' and tries to reserve or check something out and a Fine card from 'BB' comes up. That Fine card is treated exactly like a Fine card that 'AA' created. It can be viewed, printed and overridden. However it CANNOT be deleted. The fine can only be deleted at the location it was created at. It will then be removed from all other systems during the next time the Fine files are exchanged.

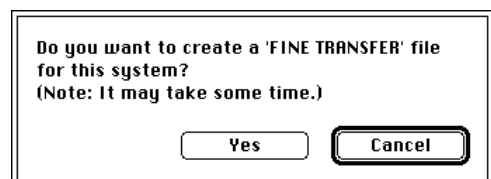
(*Note:* If you try faking out the system by temporarily changing the current main location to 'BB', that will let you delete the fine. However you will have to change the location back to 'AA' and the next time the Fine files are exchanged, then the Fine will be added back again.)

Fine Transfer without 'ShutDown'

When 'Disable Fine Transfer' is off, 'Fine Transfer...' under the 'File' menu is active. Selecting this will cause the system to run the 'Fine Transfer' routine normally executed during 'ShutDown'. It asks you to confirm that you want to do this, since it may take some time, depending on how many files you have and how many fines are in each file.



If you select 'Fine Transfer' with the 'Option' key down, you will be asked if you want to create a new Fine transfer file for this location. It asks you to confirm that you want to do this, since it may take some time, depending on how many files



you have on file. It goes through all the fines but only adds the fines from the current location to the file.

Both these options allow you to do a complete 'Fine transfer' without doing a complete 'ShutDown'.

People and Equipment

The transfer of people and equipment data is similar to the transfer of Fines but is not automatic.

Export Merge File 'Export Merge File...' under the 'File' menu gives you the opportunity to create a 'Merge' file for the either People or Equipment. It automatically names and dates the file for you, e.g. 'PH Merge.Equipment 8/22/03'. 'PH' is the location and the data after the '.' contains the type of merge file it is.

The files created can then be transferred to other locations.

Merge The files can then be 'Merged' with the current database by using the 'Merge...' option under the 'File' menu. This will present you with a standard 'Open' file dialog. From it, you will be able to select the 'Merge' file. The system then integrates any data records that are missing from the current system.
(*Note:* The merge files only contain data that can be considered global. People records are transferred but their reservations are not. Reservations are site specific, e.g. the equipment numbers are only at one location. Similarly, Equipment records are added but reservation and checkout data is not. This data is also site specific. Transferring equipment records from location 'AA' to 'BB' will add the records but it will not affect their locations. So unless you change the locations of each item, you will not be able to reserve or check out the equipment anyway. The equipment 'Merge' option is usually used to create a master equipment database of all items available at all sites on a separate Technicians machine.)

Importing People Data

Import People If you run multiple locations, then you are going to have to do downloads at each site to import all the people information. If you 'Import' the data at one location, clean up all the records, verify that the data is correct and use 'File->Disk' to save a text file of the corrected data, then that new file can be used to run the download at ALL other locations. The data only needs to be cleaned up once. (See 'Import People', P 95 for more information.)

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